United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ In first of three consecutive formal meetings today, Security Council demands immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces from Kelbadjar district and other recently occupied areas of Azerbaijan; calls for unimpeded access for humanitarian relief efforts.

+ Security Council extends UNAVEM II mandate for one more month, until end of May; asks Secretary-General to report on United Nations role in peace process; stresses readiness to expand Organization's presence in Angola.

+ Security Council, reviewing "An Agenda for Peace", says United Nations should consider economic and social issues when dealing with international peace and security; says social peace is as important as strategic or political peace.

+ Repatriation of some 370,000 Cambodian refugees successfully completed, according to spokesman for UNTAC; rehabilitation and reintegration efforts emphasized by High Commissioner for Refugees in Phnom Penh.

+ Co-Chairmen of Yugoslav Conference leave New York for Athens to preside over new round of talks with all three Bosnian parties on Vance/Owen peace plan, their spokesman says.

+ Secretary-General appoints Gillian Martin Sorenson as Special Adviser for Information and Public Policy, with rank of Under-Secretary-General.

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Alarmed over the escalation in armed hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Security Council today demanded the immediate end to all hostile acts so that a cease-fire could be established. The Council also

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demanded the immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces from the Kelbadjar district in Azerbaijan and other recently occupied areas of that country.

The Council took that action at the first of three consecutive formal meetings held this afternoon, by adopting resolution 822 (1993) unanimously.

Under the text, the Council called for the unimpeded access for international humanitarian relief efforts in the region, in particular the areas affected by the conflict, in order to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population.

The Council urged the parties concerned to immediately resume the peace talks within the framework of the Minsk Group of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and refrain from any action that would obstruct a peaceful solution of the problem. It also asked the Secretary-General, in consultations with the CSCE, to assess the situation in the region, in particular in the Kelbadjar district of Azerbaijan and to submit a further report.

Among those addressing the Council after the vote, the Permanent Representative of Djibouti to the United Nations, Roble Olhaye, said his Government rejected the Armenian assertion that the conflict was between Nagorny-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, He expressed the hope that the Council would "call a spade a spade" and move in the right direction "consistent with reality".

Regarding Nagorny-Karabakh, the French Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Jean-Bernard Merimee, said it was essential that the clashes not be transformed into a conflict between States. The preamble of the resolution struck a reasonable balance between noting the tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan, while recognizing the local character of the combatants.

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At a second meeting today, the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) for a further one-month period, until 31 May 1993. It did so by adopting unanimously resolution 823.

The Council asked the Secretary-General to submit a report on the situation in Angola, with recommendations for the role of the United Nations in the peace process. It also stressed its readiness to act promptly, on the Secretary-General's recommendation, to expand the Organization's presence in Angola in the event of significant progress in that process. UNAVEM II currently consists of 75 military observers, 30 police officers and 49 international civilian staff.

The Council also expressed the hope that the peace talks between the Government of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), which resumed on 12 April in Ajuba, Côte d'Ivoire, would lead to an immediate cease-fire and the full implementation of the "Acordos de Paz". Those Peace Accords were signed by the Angolan Government and UNITA in May 1991.

The resolution demanded that attacks on humanitarian flights in Angola end immediately and that both parties, in particularly UNITA, take measures to safeguard UNAVEM II personnel.

Brazil's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg, said the fighting in Angola -- which violated a Council demand for a cease-fire -- had resulted in a humanitarian crisis of tragic proportions. Strong and urgent action by all relevant United Nations agencies was required to save lives and alleviate suffering.

The "Acordos de Paz" provided the framework for a peaceful and democratic process of national reconciliation, he said. Once both parties had reached an agreement calling for United Nations involvement, it would be the Organization's duty to respond without delay.

The Secretary-General had recommended the extension of UNAVEM II's mandate in a letter to the President of the Council. He noted that the United Nations role in Angola was on the agenda of the Côte d'Ivoire talks.

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In meeting its responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security, the United Nations should focus on economic and social development as much as on political and security concerns, according to a statement by Security Council President Jamsheed K.A. Marker (Pakistan). The Council was today considering the subject of post-conflict peace-building as it continued its review of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's "An Agenda for Peace".

The Security Council, as the organ with primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security, fully recognized that social peace was as important as strategic or political peace, the statement said.

The Council emphasized the need to build strong foundations for peace, and highlighted the importance of United Nations work in the field of development cooperation. Activities such as disarming belligerent forces, assisting elections and clearing mines strengthened national political structures and provided a sound basis for peace.

The organizations and agencies of the United Nations had to be sensitive to the goal of strengthening peace and security as envisaged in Article 1 of the Charter, the statement said. Peace-building needed adequate financial resources and Member States and agencies should have funding available for specific projects.

The Secretary-General released "An Agenda for Peace" in June 1992 at the request of the Council at its first Summit Meeting held on 31 January, 1992. The report, which is reviewed regularly by the Security Council, analyses recent developments affecting international peace and security and introduces proposals aimed at improving the United Nations effectiveness in early warning of potential conflicts as well as post-conflict measures to build peace among former adversaries.

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Some 370,000 Cambodians refugees have been returned to their country, putting effectively a successful end to the repatriation process started last year in the framework of the Paris Peace Agreements of 1991, told correspondents today in Phnom Penh Eric Falt, spokesman for the United Nations Provisional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

He said that the successful completion was made possible with the cooperation between UNTAC, various United Nations agencies under the leadership of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and all the parties which were signatories of the Paris Peace Accords.

"The peaceful and orderly return of the Cambodian refugees is both a clear expression of the confidence that the Cambodians have in the peace process and a decisive contribution to national reconciliation", commented Yasushi Akashi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Cambodia.

Up to now, some 88 percent of the returning families had chosen to receive the cash grant option, eight percent had selected residential plots of land with housing materials and three percent had opted for agricultural land, explained Mr. Falt. From now on, UNHCR in Phnom Penh would concentrate its efforts on the rehabilitation and the reintegration of the returnees, with the launching of a series of new Quick Impact projects to facilitate the recovery of the physical, social and economic infrastructures in the area of return.

As for the some 600 remaining Cambodian refugees in Thailand who refuse to go back, UNTAC spokesman stressed that their camp was now under Thai control. Already, the local authorities had expressed their willingness to treat these people as illegal immigrants subject to normal deportation procedures. UNHCR would not be associated with this operation, said Mr. Falt, stressing nevertheless that once in Cambodia, the refugees who presented themselves to the reception centres before 5 May would be assisted.

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The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia would leave New York tonight for Athens to preside over the meeting with all three Bosnian parties on the Vance/Owen peace plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina, their spokesman, Fred Eckhard, said today. Yesterday, he had told correspondents that the meeting was called following an announcement that the Bosnian Serb "Assembly" would reconvene on Wednesday, 5 May, with the intention of re-examining its previous decision not to sign the two outstanding documents of the peace plan. Those documents concern the map of provisional provincial boundaries and the agreement on interim arrangements.

The two Special Envoys of the Russian Federation and the United States were also expected to attend, along with a representative of the European Community, all three as observers. Thorvald Stoltenberg, Mr. Vance's successor as Co-Chairman, would also attend, the spokesman said.

Also, talks between the Greek Government and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia would "most likely" continue next week, Mr. Eckhard said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today appointed Gillian Martin Sorenson as his Special Adviser for Information and Public Policy, according to a United Nations spokesman. She will hold the rank of Under-Secretary-General.

Ms. Sorenson, who is a national of the United States, will oversee and coordinate matters relating to the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations in 1995. She will also undertake special assignments as requested by the Secretary-General.

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